Likkutei Sichos

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The Best of Them

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A note on the translation: Rounded parentheses and square brackets reflect their use in the original *sichah*; squiggly brackets are interpolations of the translator or editor. The footnotes in squiggly brackets in this translation are those of the translators or editors, and do not correspond to the footnotes in the original. Great effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the translation, while at the same time striving for readability. However, the translation carries no official authority. As in all translations, the possibility of inadvertent errors exists. **Your feedback is needed** — **please send all comments to: info@projectlikkuteisichos.org.**

1. WHERE IS THE JUSTICE?

On the verse, "He {Pharaoh} took six hundred select chariots...," our Sages explain in the *Mechilta*² that the "animals" that Pharaoh used to drive these "six hundred chariots" were taken from among "the livestock that those {Egyptians} who feared the word of Hashem had driven" {indoors during the plague of hail}.3 "Based on this, Rabbi Shimon would say: '{Even} the best of the nations — {you must} kill; {even} the best of the serpents — {you must} crush⁴ their brains."

A well-known difficulty has been raised regarding this teaching: Does it make sense for the Torah to rule that one should kill even "**the best** of the nations?" This controverts {the ideals of} justice and fairness!⁵

Numerous solutions⁶ to this difficulty have been offered (some of which will be explored later), particularly, in the course of of debates between our Sages and the enemies of Israel throughout the generations (beginning with the debates of Rabbi Yechiel of Paris⁷ — one of the greatest *Tosafists* — until recent generations).

עַל הַפָּסוּק ״וַיִּקַח שֵשׁ מֵאוֹת רֶכֶב בְּחוּר וְגוֹ׳״ אִיתָא בַּמְּכִילְתָּא שָהַ״בְּהמוֹת״ שֶׁלָּקַח פַּרְעֹה עֲבוּר ״שֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת רֶכֶב״ אֵלוּ הִיוּ מִן הַ״מקנה שֶׁהַנִיס הַיָּרֵא אֶת דְּבַר ה׳״ – ״מִבָּאן הָי׳ ר׳ שִׁמְעוֹן אוֹמֵר טוֹב שֶׁבַּגוֹיִם הֲרוֹג טוֹב שֶׁבַּנְּחְשִׁים רְצֹץ אֶת מוֹחוֹ״.

וִידוּעָה הַקּוּשְׁיָא עַל מַאֲמֶר זֶה: הַיִּתְּכֵן לוֹמֵר, שֶׁהַתּוֹרָה פּוֹסֶקֶת שֶׁיֵּשׁ לַהְּרֹג אֲפָלוּ ״טוֹב שֶׁבַּגוֹיִם״ – וַהְרֵי זֶהוּ הַפֵּךְ הַצֵּרֵק וְהַיֹּשֵׁר?

עַל קוּשְׁיָא זוֹ נֶאֶמְרוּ כַּמָּה וְכַמָּה תַּרוּצִים (וַאֲחָדִים מֵהֶם יַזְפְּרוּ לְהַלָּן) — וּבִפְּרָט בְּתוֹךְ הַוִּכּוּחִים שֶׁקְיְמוּ גְּדוֹלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עִם שׁוֹנְאֵי יִשְׁרָאֵל בְּמֶשֶׁךְּ הַדּוֹרוֹת (מִוָּכּוּחֵי ר׳ יְחִיאֵל מִפְּרִיז — מִגְּדוֹלֵי בַּעֲלֵי הַתּוֹסָפוֹת — וְעַד לְדוֹרוֹתִינוּ הָאַחְרוֹנִים).

¹ Shemos 14:

² Mechilta on Shemos 14:7 {sec. 7}. Similarly, see Tanchuma, loc. cit. (sec. 8); Tanchuma (ed. Buber), "Vaera," sec. 20; Yalkut Shimoni, loc. cit., remez 186.

³ {See Shemos 9:17-21.}

⁴ {*Imrei Emes*, "*Yamim Achronim shel Pesach*," explains that the word "crush" is used advisedly. It alludes to the extraction of the good associated with *klipah*." See *infra*, however, section 13, for a more thorough analysis.}

⁵ This is so even in the realm of *halachah*. See commentaries of *Bartenura*, *Levush HaOrah*, and *Tzeidah LaDerech* on Rashi's commentary, loc. cit.

⁶ Several of these are quoted in *Torah Sheleima*, "*Miluim*" on *parshas Vaera* (sec. 19), *Otzar Havikuchim* (ed. Eisenstein).

⁷ {Unknown year of birth, died in 1286. In 1240, under orders from King Ludwig IX he debated the apostate Nicholas Donin and successfully defended Judaism.}

2.QUESTIONS ON RASHI

In his Torah commentary,⁸ Rashi also comments on this verse. Rashi quotes the words, "and all the chariots of Egypt," and explains (similar to the *Mechilta*): "Where did these animals come from? If you say that they belonged to the Egyptians, the Torah says earlier, "all the livestock of the Egyptians died." And if you say that the animals belonged to the Jewish people, does the Torah not say,¹⁰ "our livestock will also go with us"? Whose were they? They belonged to those {Egyptians} who feared the word of Hashem. Based on this, Rabbi Shimon would say, "{Even} the best of the Egyptians¹2 — {you must} kill; {even} the best of the serpents — {you must} crush their brains."

אַף רַשִּׁ״י בְּפֵּרוּשׁוֹ עֵל הַתּוֹרָה עָמֵד עַל פָּסוּק זֶה, הֶעְתִּיק מִן הַכָּתוּב אֶת הַתֵּבוֹת ״וְכֹל רֶכֶב מִצְרִים״ וּפֵּרִשׁ (כְּבַמְּכִילְתָּא): ״וּמֵהִיכָן הָיוּ הַבְּהָמוֹת הַלְלוּ, אִם תֹּאמֵר מִשֶּׁל מִצְרַיִם הְבִי נְאָמֵר וַיָּמָת כֹּל מִקְנֵה מִצְרָיִם וְאִם תֹּאמֵר מִשֶּׁל יִשְּׂרָאֵל וַהְלֹא נָאָמֵר וְגַם מִקְנֵנוּ יֵלֵךְ עִמְּנוּ, מִשֶּׁל מִי הָיוּ מֵהַיָּרֵא אָת דְּבַר ה׳. מִכָּאן הָי׳ ר׳ שִׁמְעוֹן אוֹמֵר כָּשֵׁר שֶׁבַּמִּצְרִים הְרוֹג טוֹב שִׁבַּנְחַשִּׁים רָצֹץ אָת מוֹחוֹ״.

Seemingly, this is completely unclear: True, Rashi's commentary is geared, and necessary, for even a great scholar — which is why, regarding "shnayim mikra v'echad targum," halachah rules that "a G-d fearing person should read the *Targum* as well as Rashi's commentary." Nevertheless, as we have explained many times, Rashi's commentary on *Chumash* is appropriate for, and can be understood by, even a *five*-

וְלִכְאוֹרָה אֵינוֹ מוּכָן כְּלָל: אַף שֶׁפֵּרוּשׁ רַשִּׁ״י מִיעָד וְנִצְּרָךְּ אַף לְגָדוֹל בְּישְׂרָאֵל, שֶׁמִּטַעם זֶה פְּסַק הַדִּין בְּנוֹגֵעַ לִשְׁנַיִם מִקְרָא וְאֶחָד תַּרְגוּם הוּא ״יְרֵא שָׁמַיִם יִקְרָא תַּרְגוּם וְגַם פֵּרוּשׁ רַשִּׁ״י״, הֲרֵי, כְּמוֹ שֶׁכְּכָר נִתְבָּאֵר פְּעָמִים רַבּוֹת, פֵּרוּשׁ רַשִׁ״י עַל

^{8 {}Rashi's commentary on Shemos 14:7.}

⁹ Shemos 9:6.

¹⁰ Shemos 10:26.

¹¹ This is the wording of Scripture, *Shemos* 9:20. See **Rashi's** commentary on *Shemos* 9:10, and *Re'em, Sefer HaZikaron* on Rashi's commentary, loc. cit.

¹² The common version of the *Mechilta* (and other texts) uses the term "nations." But *Midrash Tanchuma* and others use "Egyptians." This is seemingly the correct version (at least in Rashi's wording), for this is derived from "from here," i.e., regarding Egyptians. Yet some commentaries on

Rashi write "nations." It is unlikely that the printer would have emended "Egyptians" to read "nations," for what {potential error} would this have rectified? (In contrast, {the rationale for} emending "nations" to read "Egyptians" is clear.

¹³ {Lit., "the verse, twice; and the translation, once." The *Talmud* and *halachic* codes direct every Jew to review the weekly Torah portion on Friday, by reading each verse twice in the original, along with one reading of the Aramaic translation of the Torah by *Onkelos*.}

¹⁴ Shulchan Aruch (both the original and the Alter Rebbe's), "Orach Chaim," 285:2.

year-old (studying Scripture)¹⁵. {Rashi writes his commentary} in a way that enables a novice Torah student to understand the plain meaning of Scripture in its true sense without recourse to other commentaries, etc. A **straightforward** reading of Rashi's commentary provides the novice student with an exhaustive explanation {of *pshat*},¹⁶ with nothing left out (or {unnecessarily} added) in Rashi's commentary on the verse the student is currently studying, or in Rashi's explanations that the student has studied **previously**.

הַחוּפָּשׁ מַתְאִים וּמוּבָן גַּם לְבֶן חָמֵשׁ (לְמִקְרָא), וּבְאֹפֶן כָּזֶה, שֶׁיוּכַל לְהָבִין פְּשׁוּטוֹ שֶׁל מִקְרָא לַאֲמִתָּתוֹ מִבְּלִי לְהִזָּקִק לִמְפָּרְשִׁים אֲחֵרִים וכיו״ב, פִי יִמְצָא כָּל הַנִּצְרָךְ לוֹ בְּפַשְׁטוּת פֵּרוּשׁ רַשִּׁ״י, לֹא חָסֵר דָּבָר (וְלֹא יָתֵר), בֵין אָם עַל אֲתַר וּבִין אָם בְּפֵרוּשֵׁי רַשִּׁ״י שֶׁלָּמֵד לִנֶם לָכֵן.

On this basis, since the above-mentioned conundrum would confuse a five-year-old even in his cursory study of Rashi, how can Rashi quote Rabbi Shimon's teaching, "{Even} the best of the Egyptians — {you must} kill," without adding any explanation or without offering a resolution to this difficulty?

עפ״ז, כֵּינָן שֶׁהַתְּמִיהָה הַנָּ״ל עוֹלֶה אֲפָלוּ בְּלִמּוּד שִׁטְחִי שֶׁל בֶּן חָמֵשׁ – קָשֶׁה, כֵּיצַד הַבִיא רַשִׁ״י אֶת מַאֲמֵר ר׳ שָׁמְעוֹן ״כָּשֵׁר שֶׁבַּמִּצְרִים הַרוֹג״ מִבְּלִי לְהוֹסִיף בְּתוֹךְ הַדְּבָרִים שׁוּם בֵּאוּר וָתָרוּץ עֵל תִּמִיהַה זוֹ?

An even greater difficulty: The novice student learned **previously**¹⁷ that Pharaoh acted benevolently to Avraham while Avraham was in Egypt. Pharaoh sent Avraham out of Egypt with the intent of protecting him and Sarah from harm.

וְקוּשְׁיָא גְּדוֹלָה מִזּוֹ: הַבֵּן חָמֵשׁ לְמַד כְּבָר מִלְּדֶם, שֶׁכַּאֲשֶׁר אַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ הָי׳ בְּמִצְרַיִם, פַּרְעֹה הֵיטִיב עִמּוֹ וְשִׁלְחוּ מִשָּׁם מִתּוֹךְ כַּוְנָה לְהָגֵן עָלָיו וִעַל שַׂרָה מִכָּל רַע;

In addition, the novice student has learned that when Yaakov and his sons came to settle in Egypt, Pharaoh himself — of his own volition — proposed that they should settle in "the best of the land." They settled {so well} to the extent that "they acquired property there,

וְיֶתֶר עַל כֵּן לְמַד הַבֵּן חָמֵשׁ: בְּשָׁעָה שֶׁבָּאוּ יַעֲלָב וּבָנִיו לְהִתְיַשֵּׁב בְּמִצְרַיִם, פַּרְעֹה עַצְמוּ, מֵרְצוֹנוֹ, הִצִּיעַ לְהוֹשִׁיבָם בְּ״מֵיטַב הָאָרֶץ״, וְהִתְיַשְׁבוּתָם שָׁם אַף הַיָּתָה (כַּמִּסוּפֵּר בַּכַּתוּב) בַּאֹפֵן שֵׁל

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 ^{15 {}I.e., a novice Torah student. The terminology in the *sichah* is that of the *Mishnah* in *Avos* 5:22:
 "Five years is the age for the study of Scripture."}
 16 {The plain meaning of Scripture. Rashi states in his commentary to *Bereishis* 3:8: "I have come only to explain the plain meaning of the Torah."

Though there are many levels and depths of Torah interpretation, Rashi adopts a straightforward approach.}

¹⁷ *Bereishis* 12:16, 20; Rashi's commentary on verses 19-20.

¹⁸ Bereishis 47:6.

and were fertile, and multiplied greatly" (as the verse describes).

_ "וַיִּאָחֲזוּ בָה וַיִּפְרוּ וַיִּרְבּוּ מְאֹד" _

So how is it possible to say that "{Even} the best of the Egyptians — {you must} kill," when we find that there were Egyptians who related appropriately toward the Jewish people, lived together with them in peace and serenity, and even acted benevolently toward them, etc.?

ְרָאָם כֵּן, אֵיךְּ יִתְּכֵן לוֹמַר ״כָּשֵׁר שָׁבַּמִּצְרִים הָרוֹג״, בָּהּ בְּשָׁצָה שֶׁנִּמְצְאוּ מִצְרִים שֶׁהִתְיַחֲסוּ לִבְנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל כָּרָאוּי, חָיוּ עִמָּם בְּשָׁלוֹם וְשֵׁלְוָה, וְאַדְרַבָּא – הֵיטִיבוּ עִמָּם וְכוּ״?

The novice student will sense this inconsistency even more sharply when he studies *parshas Ki Seitzei*, which commands explicitly: "**Do not despise an Egyptian**...." That is, despising an Egyptian is forbidden, so certainly killing him is forbidden!

וּסְתִירָה זוֹ אַף תַּחֲרִיף אָצֶל הַבֵּן חָמֵשׁ כַּאֲשֶׁר יִלְמֵד כָּּרָשַׁת תֵּצֵא, שֶׁבָּה נָאֲמֵר צִוּוּי מְפֹּרָשׁ: ״לֹא תְּתֵצֵב מִצְרִי גּוֹי״ – הַיְנוּ שֶׁיֶשְׁנוֹ אָסוּר אֲפִילוּ ״לְתַצֵב״ מִצְרִי, וּבְוַדֵּאי שֵׁאֵין לְהַרְגוֹ !

Additionally, if "{Even} the best of the Egyptians — {you must} kill," how can we fulfill (the subsequent verse), "Children who are born to them in the third generation may enter the assembly of Hashem {i.e., they may convert to Judaism}"?²⁰ While it is true that by coming to convert, they demonstrate that they are "**the best** of the Egyptians" — Rabbi Shimon says that "**Even the best** of the Egyptians — {**you must**} **kill**!"

ְּעוֹד: אָם ״פָּשֵׁר שֶׁפַּמִּצְרִים הֲרוֹג״, כֵּיצֵד נוּכַל לְלַנֵּים (אֶת הֶמְשֵׁךְ הַפָּסוּק, שָׁם) ״דּוֹר שְׁלִישִׁי יָבוֹא לָהֶם בִּקְהַל ה׳״? הֵן אֲמֶת שְׁבוֹאוֹ לְהִתְנַיֵּר הוּא סִימָן שֶׁהוּא ״כָּשֵׁר שֶׁבַּמִּצְרִים״ – אֲבָל הֲרֵי עַל כָּךְ אָמֵר ר׳ שִׁמְעוֹן שֶׁאֲפִילוּ ״כָּשֵׁר שֶׁבַּמִּצְרִים הֲרוֹג״!

As such, Rashi ought to have addressed this question in *parshas Ki Seitzei*, at the very least.

וְכֵיוָן שֶׁכֵּן, הָי׳ רַשִּׁ״י צָרִיךְּ לְיַשֵּׁב הָמִיהַה זוֹ עכ״פּ בְּפַרַשַׁת הָצֵא.

3.MARTIAL LAW

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One of the solutions found in a number of sources²¹ is based on the version {of the above teaching} in tractate *Sofrim*:²² "{Even} the best of the pagan nations, **at a**

אֶחָד הַתֵּרוּצִים שֶׁמָּצִינוּ בכו״כ סְפָּרִים הוּא ע״פ הַגִּרְסָא בְּמֵסֶּכֶת סוֹפְּרִים ״הַטּוֹב שֵׁבָּעַכּוּ״ם בִּשְׁעַת מִלְחַמָה

¹⁹ Devarim 23:8.

²⁰ Ibid. 23:9.

²¹ Sources cited in fn. 5; *Tosfos, Avoda Zara* 26b, s.v. "V'Lo."

²² End of ch. 15 {Tractate *Sofrim* is one of the minor tractates of the Talmud}.

time of war — {you must} kill." That is, the permission granted (or obligation) to kill even the best of the pagan nations only applies during a war against the Jewish people, but in no other situation — if not at war, and certainly in a time of peace.

Seemingly, we could interpret Rashi's comment similarly. Namely, Rashi refers only to a time when Egyptians are waging war against the Jewish people. For the "G-d fearing Egyptians" were punished while the Egyptians pursued the Jewish people in order to do battle with them at the Sea of Reeds.

However, we are unable to read this interpretation into Rashi's commentary (following the approach of **pshat**), for {Rashi says}, "Based on this {lit., 'from here'}, Rabbi Shimon would say: '{Even} the best of the Egyptians — {you must} kill," which means:

- a) We learn this idea *from here*, but it is meant to be applied elsewhere to different scenarios, as well.
- b) "Based on this" from the fact that "He **Pharaoh** took... the chariots of Egypt," i.e., from the act of **taking**. **Because** the "G-d fearing" Egyptians had given their horses²³ to Pharaoh, the "G-d fearing" Egyptians deserved to be punished by Hashem at the Splitting of the Sea — with death. That is, they deserved death only because they had given their horses to Pharaoh with nefarious intentions, not because they had actively waged war against the Jewish people. They gave their horses to Pharaoh prior to the "time of war," before Pharaoh and the Egyptians engaged in warfare against the Jewish people.

הַרוֹג״, וְהַיִנוּ, שֶׁהַהֶּתֵּר (אוֹ הַחִיּוּב) להרג אפלו "טוב שבעכו"ם" לא ָנָאָמַר אָלַא בִּשָׁעַת מִלְחַמַה עָם בנ״י, אַבַל לא בִּמַצַּב אַחָר – שֵׁל הַעָדֵּר מלחמה, ומכל-שכן בשעת שלום.

עד״ז הַי׳ נָתַּן לְכָאוֹרֵה לְפַרֵשׁ גַּם בְּפֶרוּשׁ רַשִּׁ״י, שֵׁכַּוּנַתוֹ שֵׁהַדְּבַרִים אַמוּרים רק בּשׁעה שהמצרים יוֹצאים להלחם עם בני ישראל, שהרי עונשו שׁל ״הַיַּרָא אָת דְּבַר ה׳״ עַל מַעַשָּהוּ אַרַע בִּזְמַן שֶׁהָמָצְרִים רַדְפוּ אַחַרִי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֶל עַל מָנַת לְהָלַּחֶם עְמֵּם בְּיֵם סוף.

אַבַל בָּאָמֶת אֵין לְפַרָשׁ כֵּן בִּפֶרוּשׁ רַשָּ״י (דַּרֶדְ הַפָּשֵׁט) – כֵּיוַן שֵׁלְשׁוֹן רַשָּׁ״י ״מִכַּאן הַי׳ ר׳ שָׁמְעוֹן אוֹמֵר בָּשֵׁר שֵׁבַּמִּצְרִים הַרוֹג״ פֵּרוּשָה:

א) שַׁמְּכַּאן לְמֶדִים אַנוּ לְמַקוֹם אֲחֶר,

ב) מָכַּאן – מִ״וִיקַח גוֹ׳ רֶכֶב מִצְרַיִם״ קמַצַשָּה הַלְּקִיחָה, דְּכֵיוַן שָׁהַ״יַרָא – מָמַצַשָּה הַלְּקִיחָה, את דבר ה׳״ מהמצרים נתן את בָּהֶמוֹתַיו לְפַרְעֹה, לַכֵן הוּא רַאוּי לענש שהביא עליו הקב״ה בשעת קרי"ס – "הַרוֹג"; כּלוֹמר, שׁנַתְחיַב בענש המיתה לא מצד מלחמתו בָּפֿעַל עָם בנ״י, אֻלַא אַךּ וְרַק מִפְּנֵי שנתן את בהמותיו לפרעה בכונה רעה – עוד קדם ה"שעת מלחמה", לְפָנֵי שֵׁפַּרְעֹה וְהַמְּצְרִים הָתְחִילוּ להלחם בפעל עם בנ"י.

²³ {Lit. "animals."}

4.REJECTED SOLUTIONS .7

Even if we were to say that this occurrence (of taking $\{\text{the horses}\}$ — in order to later wage war) also qualifies as "a time of war," we cannot maintain that {with his remarks,} Rashi intends to say, "{you must} kill at a time of war," for the following fundamental reason: As mentioned above, Rashi wrote his commentary for a novice student, as well. Therefore, {in his commentary,} Rashi plainly and clearly explains all that is needed to clarify the plain meaning of Scripture. Consequently, if Rashi had meant to say "{you must} kill at a time of war," he would have written these words explicitly in his commentary. (He would not have relied on a novice student to search {for an explanation} until he {ultimately} discovers the meaning of Rashi's remarks... in tractate Sofrim.) Especially since — according to this explanation — "a time of war" is a critical condition {for *killing the best of the Egyptians*}!

For the same reason, it is difficult to read into Rashi's words the other solutions found in various commentaries —

[For example:

a) Rabbi Shimon's principle means (not that "the best of the Egyptians" deserves to be punished — "kill"; rather) that even "the best of the Egyptians" [is the sort that **says**], "kill." Meaning, when a suspected murderer is on trial, even "the best of the Egyptians" is prepared to rule in favor of execution ("kill") based on conjecture alone, without conducting an appropriate investigation and without considering a defendant's merits.²⁴ In

אַפָּלוּ אָם נָאָמַר שַׁגַּם אֹפֵן זָה (וְיַקַח על מנת להלחם לאחרי זה) נכלל – בָּגַרַר ״בִּשָׁעַת מִלְחַמַה״ – עַדַיִן אָי אפשר לומר שכּוּנת רש״י היא ״בִּשָּׁעַת מִלְחַמַה הַרוֹג״, וּמְטַּעַם עַקָּרִי: כַּאַמוּר לְעֵיל, רַשִּׁ״י כַּתַב פָרוּשׁוֹ גַּם עֲבוּר בֵּן חַמֵשׁ – וְלַכֵּן, בַנַ״ל, כַּל פֵּרוּשׁ הַנִּצְרַךְ בִּפְשׁוּטוֹ שֵׁל מָקָרָא כָּתָבוֹ רַשְׁ״י בִּאֹפֶן פַּשׁוּט וּבַרוּר; וּמְמֵּילַא, לוּ הַיִּתָה כַּוַּנַת רַשִּ״י ״בִּשָׁעַת מָלְחַמֵה הַרוֹג״, הַרֵי הַי׳ כּוֹתֵב תַּבוֹת אֵלּוּ בִּמְפֿרַשׁ (וַלֹא הַי׳ סומד על כַּךְ שָהַבֵּן חַמֵשׁ יִחַפָּשׁ עַד שִיגַלָּה אָת כַּוַנַתוֹ – שֵׁל רַשִׁ״י – ב... מֹס׳ סוֹפָרִים). וּבִפָּרֵט שֵׁלְפִי תֵּרוּץ זֵה הַרִי ״שָׁעַת מְלְחַמַה״ הִיא תִּנַאי יעקרי!

וּמֵהַאי טַעְמָא, קָשֶׁה גַּם לְהַעֲמִיס בְּכַוָּנַת רַשִׁ״י אֶת הַפֵּרוּשִׁים הָאֲחֵרִים שָׁהוּבָאוּ בַּסְפַרִים –

[לְדוּגְמָא: א) שֶׁפֵּרוּשׁ כְּלֶל זֶה שֶׁאָמַר ר׳ שִׁמְעוֹן הוּא (לֹא שֶׁהַ״בְּשֵׁר שֶׁבַּמְצְרִים״ רָאוּי לְעֹנֶשׁ ״הֲרוֹג״, שֶׁלָּא): אֲפִלּוּ הַ״בְּשֵׁר שֶׁבַּמִצְרִים״ [הוּא כְּזֶה – הָאוֹמֵר] ״הֲרוֹג״ – הַיְנוּ, שֶׁבְּשָׁצָה שֶׁחוֹטֵא הָחְשׁוּד בִּרְצִיחָה עוֹמֵד לַמִּשְׁכָּט, אֲזַי גַּם ״כְּשֵׁר שֶׁבַּמִצְרִים״ מוּכָן לְדוּנוֹ לְמָנֶת (״הֲרוֹג״) עַל סְמַךְ אוּמְדָנָא בִּלְבַד, לְלֹא חַקִּירָה הוֹנֵגֵת וּמִבְּלִי לַהַפֹּךְ

²⁴ This explanation is found in the dispute between Don Shmuel Abarbanel and Don Shelomo HaLevi, printed in *Sefer Shevet Yehudah*.

contrast, Jewish law dictates that "the court shall judge... and the court shall protect";²⁵ meaning, {to convict an accused} we require witnesses {to the crime},warnings,²⁶ etc., and we **are obligated** to consider the defendant's merits.

b) Rabbi Shimon's principle is only hyperbole, to be understood in the same manner as Rabbi Shimon's subsequent remarks (as recorded in tractate *Sofrim*):²⁷ "{Even} the best of women practice witchcraft." G-d forbid that a person should say that a daughter of Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel and Leah, especially "the best of them," should be considered a witch! Rather, this was hyperbole, said in order to strongly emphasize how careful even "the best of women" must be to avoid witchcraft.²⁸ "{Even} the best of the Egyptians — {you must} kill" should be understood similarly. This statement is not to be taken literally, but rather as hyperbole, in order to emphasize the unreliability of Egyptians.

c) During Rabbi Shimon's era, the Jewish people suffered from severe persecution by anti-Semites. It was **they** who Rabbi Shimon had in mind with his teaching, "{Even} the best of the Egyptians — {you must} kill," for they demonstrated open hatred for the Jewish people (similar to the "snake" — mentioned next in the teaching

בּזְכוּתוֹ ; משא״כ אֵצֶל בנ״י הַדִּין הוּא בְּאֹפֶן ד״ושפטו הָעֵרָה גּוֹ׳ וְהִצִּילוּ הָעֵרָה״, הַיְנוּ שֶׁנִּרְרָשִׁים עֵרִים וְהַתְרָאָה וְכוּ׳, וְיֵשׁ חִיוּב לְהַפֵּךְ בִּזְכוּתוֹ שֵׁל הַנִּדּוֹן.

ב) שַהַדְבַרִים נָאָמָרוּ בַּדְרָךְ גוּזְמַא בָּלְבַר, וְעַל דָרֶךְ הַפָּרוּשׁ בִּהָמְשֵׁךְ מאַמרוֹ שׁל ר׳ שמעוֹן (כּמּוּבא במסכת סופרים): ״הכשרה שבנשים בעַלת כּשׁפִים״ – שח״ו לוֹמר על בּת שַרַה רָבָקָה רַחֶל וְלָאַה, וּמָה עוֹד – ״הכשרה שבהן״, שהיא ״בעלת כְשַׁפִים״! אֵלָא וַדַּאי שֶהַדַּבַר נֵאָמַר בלשון גוזמא על מנת להדגיש עד פמה נצרכת זהירות בענינים אלה אַפלוּ בּנוֹגע ל״כשרה שבּנשים״; רעד״ז יָשׁ לְפַרָשׁ בִּעִנִיַן ״כַּשֶׁר שַׁבַּמִּצְרִים הַרוֹג״, שֵׁאֵין הַכַּוָנָה כפשוטו, אלא בדרך גוזמא, על מנת לְהַדְגִּישׁ בִּתֹקֵף עַד כַּמַה אָין לְסִמֹךְ צַלֵיהֶם.

ג) בּזְמַנּוֹ שֶׁל ר׳ שִׁמְעוֹן סָבְלוּ בנ״י צְרוֹת וּגְזֵרוֹת רַבּוֹת מִידֵי שׁוֹנְאֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל – וַאֲלֵיהֶם נִתְכַּוּן ר׳ שִׁמְעוֹן בְּמַאֲמָרוֹ ״כָּשֵׁר שֶׁבַּמִּצְרִים הַרוֹג״, כֵּיוָן שֶׁהַלָּלוּ הֶרְאוּ שִׂנְאָה גָּלוּי׳ לבנ״י (בִּדוּגְמַת הַ״נָחָשׁ״ – הַמוּזִּכֵּר מִיָּד

²⁵ Bamidbar 35:24-25. See Rosh Hashanah 26a.

²⁶ {In the procedure known as "hasra'ah," two qualified witnesses must warn the would-be perpetrator that the crime he is about to commit is forbidden by the Torah, and inform him of this crime's punishment. The perpetrator must acknowledge the warning in order for the

punishment to be administered. Absent the *hasra'ah*, this punishment may not normally be administered by the courts.}

²⁷ Sofrim, ch. 15, par. 10; Jerusalem Talmud,

[&]quot;Kiddushin," ch. 4, par. 11.

²⁸ See *Pnei Moshe's* commentary on the Jerusalem Talmud, "*Kiddushin*," ch. 4, par. 11.

— which is full of venom). But he was not referring to gentiles generally, not even to the Egyptians. As proof, we find several teachings of our Sages that **emphasize** to what extent Hashem showed mercy toward the Egyptians. This is strikingly evident in (the reasoning behind) the commandment, "Do not despise an Egyptian, for you were a stranger in his land."]²⁹

It is difficult to read these explanations, and others like them, into Rashi's words, for they do not flow from the simple meaning of Rashi's wording, "{Even} the best of the Egyptians — {you must} kill." Rashi would have had to add explanatory remarks if his intention was in accord with those explanations. "

Since Rashi does **not** do so, but merely quotes the few words of Rabbi Shimon as they appear in the *Mechilta*, we must say that this teaching is to be understood based on Rabbi Shimon's words alone, and Rashi thinks that nothing needs to be added to his commentary — not even for the novice student — in order to resolve the abovementioned difficulty.

5. A GREATER PUZZLE

This leads us to the most perplexing point in this matter: Assuming we could resolve all of the issues stemming from Rashi's remarks and could explain how the dictum, "{Even} the best of the Egyptians — {you must} kill" in a way that will be completely clear, at the outset, to the novice student — an opposite difficulty

לאח״ז – הַפֶּלֵא בְּאֶרֶס); אֲבָל אֵין כַּוָּנָתוֹ לַגּוֹיִם בִּכְלָל, וַאֲפָלוּ לֹא לַמִּצְרִיִּים. וְהָא רְאָיֶ׳, שֶׁהָרִי מָצִינוּ כַּמָּה מֵאַמְרֵי רז״ל הַמַּדְגִּישִׁים עַד כַּמָּה רְחֵם הַקב״ה עַל הַמִּצְרִיִּים, וּבִפְּרָט בּוֹלֵט הַדָּבָר בְּ(טַעַם הַ)צִּוּוּי ״לֹא תְתַעֵב מִצְרִי כִּי גֵּר הָיִיתָ בְאַרְצוֹ״] –

פֵּרוּשִׁים אֵלּוּ וְכָל כַּיּוֹצֵא בָּהֶם קְשֶׁה לְהַצְּמִיסָם בְּפֵרוּשׁ רַשִּ״י, דְּבַוָּון שֶׁאִין הם עוֹלִים מִן הַמַּשְׁמָעוּת הַפְּשׁוּטָה שֶׁל הַלָּשׁוֹן שֶׁמֵּבִיא רַשִּ״י ״כָּשֵׁר שֶׁבַּמִּצְרִים הְרוֹג״, הְבֵי הָי׳ עַל רַשִּ״י לְהוֹסִיף מִילוֹת הַסְבֵּר כְּדֵי לְבָאֵר אֶת כַּוָנַת מַאֲמָר זָה.

וּמֵאַחַר שֶׁרַשִּׁ״י לֹא הוֹסִיף דָּבֶּר, אֶלָּא רַק הֶעְתִּיק תִּבוֹת סְפוּרוֹת אֵלוּ מִמַּאֲמָר ר׳ שִׁקְעוֹן כְּפִי שֶׁהוּא בַּמְּכִילְתָּא, בְּהֶכְרַחַ לוֹמַר, שֻׁהַבֵּאוּר בָּזֶה עוֹלֶה מִדְּבְרֵי ר׳ שִׁמְעוֹן גּוּפָא, בְּאֹפָן שָׁאִין רַשִּׁ״י צָרִיךְ לְהוֹסִיף עֲלֵיהֶם מְאוּמָה עַל מְנָת לְיַשֵּׁב אֶת הַקּוּשְיָא הַנְּ״ל, אֲפָלוּ לֹא עֲבוּר הַבֵּן הַמֵשׁ.

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לְאַחֲרֵי כָּל זֶה בָּאִים אָנוּ אֶל הַתְּמִיהָה הַגְּדוֹלְה מִכֹּל בְּעִנְיָן זֶה: נַנִּיחַ שֶׁנּוּכַל לְיַשֵׁב אֶת דְּבְרִי רַשִׁ״י מִכָּל צֵד וּפִנָּה, וּלְבָאֵר מַדּוּעַ הַמַּאֲמָר ״טוֹב שֶׁבַּמִּצְרִים הַרוֹג״ מוּבָן וּמְחֻנָּר לְגַמְרִי, מִלְכַתְּחַלֵּה, בְּצִינִי בֵּן חַמֵשׁ – הַרִי

²⁹ See *Gur Aryeh's* commentary on *Devarim* 23:8.

would arise: How is it possible that, over the course generations, several of our greatest Sages have toiled to resolve this difficulty, and were not satisfied with Rashi's explanation, geared for the novice student? מֵעַתָּה יִקְשֶׁה לְאִידָךְ גִּיסָא: אֵיךְ יִתְּכֵן שֶׁבְּמֶשֶׁךְ דּוֹרוֹת יָגְעוּ כ״כ גְּדוֹלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְתָרֵץ קוּשְׁיָא זוֹ, וְלֹא הִסְתַּפְּקוּ בְּהֶסְבֵּר שָׁיֵּשׁ בְּיַד רַשִׁ״י עֲבוּר בֶּן חָמֵשׁ?

Obviously, we don't refer to a resolution of the novice student's question, that, while corresponding to his level of understanding, is not truthful in its reasoning and explanation (which he will only discover when studying the aforementioned commentaries when he matures). Gd forbid that a person should say that Rashi teaches untruths to a novice student! Rather, Rashi's intention is certainly to offer a true reason and explanation. His {implicit} explanation is so clear — even for the novice student — that Rashi has no need to add anything to the wording in the *Mechilta*. Nonetheless, this {implicit} explanation is never mentioned in all of the Sages' debates {on this topic}!

דּפְּשִׁיטָא שֶׁאֵין הַכַּנְנָה כָּאן לְתָרֵץ אֶת שְׁאֵלֶתוֹ שֶׁל הַבֵּן חָמֵשׁ בְּהֶסְבֵּר לְפִי הַשְּׁגָתוֹ, אֲשֶׁר אֵינוֹ הַטַּעַם וְהַבֵּאוּר הָאֲמִתִּי (שֻׁאוֹתוֹ יִמְצָא בַּסְּפָרִים הַנְּ״ל רַק לֹכְשָׁיגְדַּל) – ח״ו לוֹמֵר שֶׁרַשִּ״י לוֹמֵד עם בֶּן חָמֵשׁ לַמְּקְרֵא שֶׁלֹא אַלְבָּא דָאֲמֶת – אֶלָא וַדַּאי שֶׁכַּנְנַת רַשִׁ״י הִיא לַטַעַם וְלַבֵּאוּר הָאֲמִתִּי, שָׁהוּא פְּשׁוּט עַד כְּדֵי כָּךְ שָׁאֵינוֹ צְרִיךְ לְהוֹסִיף מְאוּמָה עַל לְשׁוֹן הַמְּכִילְתָּא, אֲפִלּוּ עֲבוּר הַבֵּן חָמֵשׁ; וּמִכָּל מָקוֹם, לְאִידָךְ, לֹא הוּוְכַּר בֵּאוּר זֶה בְּכָל הוּכּוּחים!

6. ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

We must also clarify:

a. Rashi's commentary is not a catalogue of halachic rulings; rather, it is meant to explain the plain meaning of Scripture. As such, why is it necessary — in explaining the plain meaning of Scripture — to quote, "Based on this, Rabbi Shimon would say..."? To answer Rashi's question, "Where did these animals come from?"³⁰ saying that they came from "those {Egyptians} who feared the word of Hashem," and nothing more, would have sufficed.

נַם צַרִיךְ לְהַבִין:

٦.

א) פּרוּשׁ רַשִּ״י אֵינוֹ סֵפֶּר שֶׁל פִּסְקִי
 הַלְּכוֹת, אֶלָּא בֵּאוּר פְּשֵׁט הַכְּתוּבִים –
 וא״כ, מַדּוּעַ נָחוּץ לְצֹרֶךְ פֵּרוּשׁ הַכְּתוּבִים לְהָבִיא אֶת דְּבְרִי הַמְּכִילְתָּא ״מִבָּעוֹ הִי״ ? – וַהְרֵי עַל מְנָת לְיַשֵּׁב אֶת הַקּוּשְׁיָא ״מֵהִיכָן
 עַל מְנָת לְיַשֵּׁב אֶת הַקּוּשְׁיָא ״מֵהִיכָן
 הָיוּ הַבְּהמוֹת הַלְּלוּ״ דֵּי הָי׳ לוֹמֵר
 שַׁבָּאוּ מֵ״הַיֵּרָא אֶת דְּבַר ה׳״ וְתוּ לָא.

 $^{^{30}}$ {This is the question that precedes the comment of the Mechilta quoted in sec. 1 above.}

b. Even if we say that Rashi had to explain that even "those who feared the word of Hashem" did not behave appropriately — in order to forestall the question as to how someone who "fears the word of Hashem" could pledge his animals to the war effort against the Jewish people — a difficulty remains: Why is it necessary to say that he deserves to be killed?

ב) אֲפָלוּ אָם נָאֶמַר שֶׁהוּצְרַךְ רַשִּׁ״י לְהַשְּׁמִיעֵנוּ שֶׁאֵין לְבְטֹחַ גַּם בְּ״יָרֵא אֶת דְּבַר ה״׳ - עַל מְנָת לְיַשֵּׁב אֶת הַשְּׁאֵלָה: פֵיצַד יִתָּכֵן שֶׁאָדָם שֶׁהִנּוּ ״יָרָא אֶת דְּבַר ה״׳ נוֹתֵן אֶת בְּהֵמוֹתִיו עַל מְנָת לְהַלָּחֵם בבנ״י – עֲדַיִן אֵינוֹ מְחוּנָּר, מַדּוּעַ נוֹגֵעַ לְעִנְיָנֵנוּ גַּם סִייּם הַמַּאֲמָר הַנָּ״ל, שֶׁרָאוּי הוּא לְעֹנֶשׁ ״הַרוֹג״?

c. Seemingly, the subsequent and concluding part of this dictum, "the best of the serpents — {you must} crush their brains," is irrelevant to explaining our verse.

ג) לְכָאוֹרָה, לְהֶמְשֵׁךְּ וְסִיּוּם הַמַּאֲמָר ״טוֹב שֶׁבַּנְּחָשִׁים רְצֹץ אֶת מוֹחוֹ״ אֵין כָּל שַיָּכוּת לְפֵרוּשׁ הַפָּסוּק?

d. Why must we learn that "the best of the serpents {you must} crush their brains" from the words "based on this?" Scripture teaches this explicitly:³¹ "I will plant enmity between you… **he will pound your head!**"

ד) מַדּוּעַ יֵשׁ צֹּרֶךְ לִלְמֹד ״מִבֶּאן״ שַׁ״טוֹב שֶׁבַּנְּחָשִׁים רְצֹץ אֶת מוֹחוֹ״ – וַהֲרֵי מִקְרָא מָלֵא דִּבֵּר הַכְּתוּב: ״וְאִיבָה אָשִׁית בֵּינְךְּ גּוֹ׳ הוּא יְשׁוּפְךְּ רֹאשׁ״?

7•

FINER POINTS

There are additional nuances in Rashi's explanation that require explanation:

a. Why, in this instance, does Rashi quote the author of this teaching by name — *Rabbi Shimon*? (As explained many times,) Rashi only mentions the name of an author if doing so adds clarity to Rashi's remarks.

ז. עוֹד דִּיּוּקִים בְּפֵרוּשׁ רַשִּׁ״י זֶה: א) לְשֵׁם מָה הֵבִיא רַשִּ״י כָּאן אֶת שֵׁם בַּעַל הַמֵּימְרָא – ר׳ שִׁמְעוֹן? – וַהְבִי (כְּמוֹ שֶׁנִּתְבָּאֵר כַּמָּה פְּעָמִים) רַשִּ״י מַזְכִיר זֹאת רַק כְּשָׁיֵשׁ בָּזֶה תּוֹסֶפֶּת בֵּאוּר לִפָּרוּשׁוֹ.

b. Regarding "the best of the Egyptians," Rashi says, "kill," but regarding "the best of the serpents," Rashi

ב) בְּנוֹגֵעַ לַ״בְּשֵׁר שֶׁבַּמִּצְרִים״ לְשׁוֹן רַשִּ״י הִיא ״הֵרוֹג״, וְאָלוּ בִּנוֹגֵעַ ל

³¹ Bereishis 3:15.

says, "**crush their brains.**" {Why does he not use the same wording for both?}

״טוֹב שֶׁבַּנְּחָשִׁים״ – ״רְצֹץ אֶת מוֹחוֹ״?

c. Seemingly, when writing, "crush," Rashi should have said "crush their **heads**," corresponding to the wording in the verses, "he will pound your **head**," and "you have crushed the heads of the Leviathan."³²

ג) לְכְאוֹרָה, בְּהֶמְשֵׁךְ לַלְּשׁוֹן ״רְצֹץ״ הָי׳ רַשִּׁ״י צָרִיךְ לוֹמֵר ״רְצֹץ אֶת רֹאשׁוֹ״, בְּהֶתְאָם לִלְשׁן הַכָּתוּב: ״הוּא יְשׁוּפְךָּ רֹאשׁ״ ״רָצַצְתָּ רֹאשִׁי לִוְיָתָן״?

d. What is the meaning behind the nuanced wording, "based on this {lit., 'from here'} Rabbi Shimon would say, etc." By inference, this phrase precludes deriving this teaching from another source. Why {must we derive this teaching} specifically "from here?"

ד) מַהוּ הַדִּיּוּק ״מִכֶּאן הָי׳ ר׳ שִׁמְעוֹן אוֹמֵר כוּ׳״, שֶׁבָּא לְמַצֵט, שֶׁאֵין לִלְמֹד זֹאת מִמָּקוֹם אַחֵר אֶלָּא דַּוְקָא ״מִכָּאן״?

8.

WHY WERE THE EGYPTIANS ELIMINATED?

In order to clarify this issue, we must preface with a broad question regarding Rashi's explanation:

Seemingly, the version in tractate *Sofrim*, "{Even} the best of the pagan nations, **at a time of war** — {you must} kill," is more **appropriate**, even according to the plain meaning of Scripture: Since the Egyptians came to wage **war** against the Jewish people [and Hashem's punishment of the Egyptians was also through war, as the Torah says, "Hashem will **wage war** for you," and "Hashem **waged war** for them"³³], even a novice student understands that at a time of war, it is impossible

ח. כְּדֵי לְבָאֵר עִנְיָן זֶה, יֵשׁ לְהַקְּדִּים שָׁאֵלָה כְּלָלִית הַמִּתְעוֹרֶרֶת עַל פֵּרוּשׁ רשׁ״י זה:

לְכְאוֹרָה, הַגּּרְסָא שֶׁבְּמַּסֶּכֶת סוֹפְּרִים —
״הַטּוֹב שֶׁבְּעַכּוּ״ם בִּשְׁעַת מִלְחָמָה
הַרוֹג״ – הוֹלֶמֶת גַּם אֶת פְּשׁוּטוֹ שֶׁל
מִקְרָא: מֵאַחַר שֶׁהַמִּצְרִים בָּאוּ לְהִלָּחֵם
עִם בנ״י [וְאַף עוֹנְשׁוֹ שֶׁל הקב״ה
לְמִצְרִים הָי׳ בְּאֹפֶן שֶׁל ״מִלְחָמָה״,
כְּמוֹ שֶׁבָּתוּב: ״ה׳ יִלָּחֵם לָכֶם גּוֹ׳״,
״ה׳ נִלְחַם לָהֶם גּוֹ״, הַבִי גַּם בֶּן
חַמֵשׁ מֵבִין, שֵׁבָּעַת מִלְחַמַה עָם אוֹיֵב

³² Tehillim 74:14.

³³ Shemos 14:14, 30.

to identify who is "the best" of the enemy (in the course of battle).

As such, this version is smoother than the version that Rashi quotes from *Mechilta*, which says without qualification "{Even} the best of the Egyptians — {you must} kill" which:

- a. Refers to all times and circumstances which utterly controverts {the ideals of} justice and fairness;
 and
- b. Emphasizes that an Egyptian "who feared Hashem" deserved to die merely because he gave his animals to Pharaoh (as mentioned above in sec. 3)!

But in truth, this does not pose any difficulty: On the level of *pshat*, it is clear that the miracle of the Splitting of the Sea and the elimination of the Jewish people's Egyptian pursuers was not strictly a result of their pursuit of the Jewish people and the war the Egyptians waged against them, for the Torah says previously that Hashem told Moshe, "I will harden Pharaoh's heart and he will pursue...."34 Additionally, the Torah says subsequently, "Hashem hardened Pharaoh's heart... and he pursued...."35 Since this pursuit took place because Hashem hardened Pharaoh's heart, the Egyptians did not deserve to be punished for this {i.e., for pursuing the Jews and waging war}! Rather, this punishment was a continuation of Hashem's earlier plagues upon the Egyptians as a consequence for having oppressed and enslaved the Jewish people over the course of many years. As the conclusion36 of all the אָי אֶפְשָׁר לְהַפְּרִיד אֶת הַ״כְּשֵׁרִים״ אֲשֶׁר בַּצַּד שֶׁכְּנֶגֶד (בִּשְׁעַת הַמִּלְחָמָה עַצְמָה) –

וא״כ הֲרֵי אַדְּרַבָּה, נְמְצָא שֶׁגְּרְסָא זוֹ מְחוּנֶּנֶרת יוֹתֵר מִן הַגִּרְסָא שֶׁהַבִּיא רַשִׁ״י מִן הַמְּכִילְתָּא, שֶׁבָּה נָאֲמֵר בִּסְתָם – ״כָּשֵׁר שֶׁבַּמִּצְרִים הֲרוֹג״ [וָהַיִנוּ:

א) בְּכֶל עֵת וּבְכֶל מַצֶּב – שֶׁזֶּהוּ הֵפֶּךְ הַצֵּרַק וְהַיֹּשֶׁר לְגַמְרֵי.

ב) הַדָּבָר מַדְגִּישׁ שֶׁ״הַנָּרְא אֶת דְּבַר ה׳״ הִתְחַיֵּב מִיתָה רַק מִפְּנֵי שֶׁנָּתַן אֶת בְּהֵמוֹתָיו לְפַרְעֹה (כַּנַ״ל ס״ג)] ?

אַלַא שָבָּאָמֶת אָין זוֹ קוּשִׁיַא כְּלַל: בַּדַרָדְ הַפְּשַׁט מוּבַן, שֵׁהַנֵּס דקרי״ס וְכָלִיוֹן הַמִּצְרִים הַרוֹדְפִים לֹא אָרַע רַק מְפָּנֵי שֵׁהַמִּצְרִים רַדְפוּ אַחַר בנ״י וְנָלְחַמוּ בַּהָם – שַהַרִי לְעֵיל בַּכַּתוּב נַאָמַר שהקב״ה אַמַר לִמֹשָה: ״וְחָזַּקתִּי אָת לֶב פַּרִעֹה וְרַדַף גּוֹ׳״, וְכֵן בַּפַּסוּק לאח״ז ״וַיִחַזֵּק ה׳ אָת לֶב פַּרְעֹה גּוֹ׳ וַיִּרְדֹּף גּוֹ׳״, וְכֵיוַן שֵׁהַרְדִיפַה בַּאַה מִפָּנֵי שָה׳ חָזָּק אָת לֶב פַּרְעֹה, אין להענישם על כּךְּ ! – אלא הי׳ זה המשך למכות הקודמות שהביא ה׳ עַל מִצְרַיִם עַל כַּךְ שֵׁעְנּוּ אָת בנ״י ושעבדו אותם בְּמֵשֶׁךְ שַׁנִים רַבּוֹת כ"כ ; וכסיום וגמר לכל המכות הביא עליהם הקב"ה את הענש

³⁴ Shemos 14:4.

³⁵ Shemos 14:8.

³⁶ See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 3 (pg. 878 ff., explained in detail there), which explains that the Splitting

plagues, Hashem delivered the greatest punishment of all — the miracle of the Splitting of the Sea, in consequence of which, "**not even one** of them remained."³⁷

הַגָּדוֹל בְּיוֹתֵר – נֵס קרי״ס, שעי״ז הֲרֵי ״לֹא נִשָּאַר בָּהָם עַד אֵחָד״.

Therefore, Rashi could not have quoted the version in tractate *Sofrim*, that (only) "at a time of war— {you must} kill," because the intent of Scripture is not that the pursuit {of the Jews} and war waged by the Egyptians was the reason for their demise at the Sea of Reeds.

וְלָכֵן אֵין רַשִּ״י יָכוּל לְהָבִיא אֶת הַגּּרְסָא מִפֵּּסֶּכֶת סוֹפְּרִים ״טוֹב שֶׁבָּעַפּוּ״ם (רַק) בִּשְׁעַת מִלְחָמָה הַרוֹג״ – כִּי אֵין כַּוָּנַת הַכְּתוּב לוֹמַר שֶׁרְדִיפָּתָם וּמִלְחַמְתָּם שֶׁל הַמִּצְרִים הָיוּ הַסְּבָּה לִמִיתַתָם בִּיַם סוּף.

9.

THIS IS WHY

On this basis, we can understand³⁸ why Rashi needed to write, "based on this, Rabbi Shimon would say..." (despite the fact that Rashi's commentary is not a halachic work): By Rashi saying that "those who feared the word of Hashem" had given their animals to Pharaoh, we understand that they were present at the Splitting of the Sea as well.³⁹ Consequently, they also were punished together with the other Egyptians. This demands an explanation: How is it possible that even "those who feared the word of Hashem" perished at the Splitting of the Sea just as⁴⁰ those who did not "fear..." (as the Torah says,⁴¹ "not even one of them remained") for merely giving their animals {to Pharaoh}?

ט. וּלְפִי זֶה מוּבֶן הַשַּעֵם שֶׁהוּכְרַח רַשִּׁ״י לְהָבִיא אֶת הֶמְשֵׁךְּ הַמַּאֲמָר ״מִכָּאן הָי׳ ר׳ שִׁמְעוֹן אוֹמֵר כוּ׳״ (הְגַּם שָׁאֵין פרש״י סָפֶּר הֲלָכוֹת): מִדְּבְרֵי רַשִּׁ״י שֶׁ״הַיָּרֵא אֶת דְּבַר ה׳״ נְתְנוּ בַּהְמוֹתֵיהֶם לְפַרְעֹה, מוּבֶן שֶׁגַּם הָם הָיוּ בקרי״ס, וּמִמֵּילָא, שֶׁגַּם הֵם נֶעֶנְשׁוּ יַחַד עם שְאָר הַמִּצְרִים – וא״כ צְרִיךְ בֵּאוּר, אֵיךְ יִתְּכֵן שֶׁגַּם ״הַיָּרֵא אֶת דְּבַר ה׳״ מֵת בקרי״ס בְּשֶׁנָה לְאֵלוּ שֶׁלֹּא הָיוּ ״יָרָא גּוֹי״ (כְּמַאֲמָר הַכָּתוּב שֶׁלֹא נִשְׁאַר בָּהֶם עַד אֶחָד״) רַק מִפְּנִי שֶׁנַּתַן אֶת בְּהֵמוֹתָיו לְפַרְעֹה ?

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of the Sea was the conclusion of the Exodus from Egypt.

^{37 {}Shemos 14:28.}

³⁸ {This resolves the question from sec. 7, subsection a.}

³⁹ As the *Levush* explains, ad loc: 'Since Pharaoh had successfully persuaded them to give him their

horses for the pursuit, he naturally would have also persuaded them to join him in his pursuit. This way, they could recoup the riches they had lent to the Jews.'

⁴⁰ In the manner of **death** — see Rashi on *Shemos* 15:5, s.v. *"k'mo aven.*"

⁴¹ Shemos 14:28.

(If we were to posit that the Egyptians' met their demise because they pursued the Jewish people in order to wage war against them, their punishment would have been justified (and Rashi would not have needed to address this point). However, since this pursuit was not the cause {of their demise}, it is perplexing why "those who feared the word of Hashem" were punished.)

This is particularly perplexing, since the novice student already studied the saga of Sodom and Amorah, and {he knows that} had there only been (nine or) ten righteous citizens, not only would they have been saved themselves, but their merit would have served to protect all the citizens of their city. But here, the exact opposite happened: not only did {the presence of} "those who feared the word of Hashem" not protect the other Egyptians from being decimated, but even "those who feared the word of Hashem" themselves were not saved.

Therefore, Rashi quotes the dictum of Rabbi Shimon, "Based on this... {even} the best of the nations — {you must} kill; {even} the best of the serpents...," in order to explain that "those who feared" were punished not only because they had given their animals to Pharaoh. Rather, the harsh punishment of "those who feared" proves that they had given their animals to Pharaoh because of their hatred for the Jewish people, which they shared equally with the other Egyptians. This "venomous" hatred (symbolic of a serpent's venom) drove **all** the Egyptians to harshly afflict the Jewish people over so many years. For this reason, as punishment Hashem decreed that **all** of them (even for "those who feared") be 'killed' — "not even one of them remained."

(אִילּוּ נֶאֲמֵר שֶׁמִּיתָתֶם הָיְתָה מִפְּנֵי שָׁרָדְפוּ אֶת בנ״י לְשֵׁם מִלְחָמָה, הָי׳ מוּבָן הַטַּעַם שֶׁנִּחְחַיְּבוּ בְּעֹנֶשׁ זֶה (וְרַשִׁ״י לֹא הָי׳ צָּרִיךְּ לְבָאֵר זֹאת); אַךְ כֵּיוָן שֶׁהָרְדִיפָּה אֵינֶנָּה הַסִּבָּה, לֲשֶׁה לְהָבִין מֵדּוּעַ בָּא הָעֹנֶשׁ גַּם עַל אֵלוּ שָׁהַיוּ מִסּוּג ״הַיֵּרָא אָת דְּבַר ה׳״),

וּבִפְּרָט שֶׁהַבֵּן חָמֵשׁ כְּבָר לְמֵד בְּפָּרְשַׁת סְדוֹם וַעֲמֹּרָה, שֶׁאלוּ הָיוּ שֶׁם רַק (תִּשְׁעָה) עֲשָׂרָה צַדִּיקִים, לֹא זוֹ בִּלְבַד שָׁהָיוּ נִצּוֹלִים בְּעַצְמָם, אֶלָּא שֻׁוְּכוּתָם הָיְתָה מְגנְנָה גַּם עַל כָּל הַדָּרִים בְּעִירָם; וְהַנָּה כָּאן הִתְרַחֵשׁ הַהַפֶּךְ מַמְּשׁ: לֹא זוֹ בִּלְבַד שֶׁאֵלוּ (מִסוּג ״הַיָּרֵא אֶת דְּבַר ה׳״) לֹא הַגנּוּ עַל הַמִּצְרִים הַנּוֹתָרִים מִכְּלַיָ׳, אֶלָּא שֶׁגַּם הֵם עַצְמָם לֹא נִצְלוּ.

לְכֵן הַבִּיא רַשִּׁ״י אֶת מַאֲמֵר ר״ש
״מְפָּאן פּוּ׳ פָּשֵׁר שֶׁבַּמִּצְּרִים הֲרוֹג טוֹב
שֶׁבַּנְּחָשִׁים פּוּ״, לְבָאֵר, שֻׁעוֹנְשׁוֹ שֶׁל
הַ״יִרְא״ לֹא הָי׳ רַק מִפְּנִי שֶׁנָּתַן אֶת
בְּהֵמוֹתִיו לְפַּרְעֹה, אֶלָּא שֶׁעֹנֶשׁ חָמוּר
הָבְּהַמוֹת הָיְיָרָא״ הוּא הוֹכָחָה, שֶׁנְּתִינַת
הַבְּהַמוֹת הָיְתָה תּוֹצָאָה שֶׁל שִׂנְאָתוֹ
לבנ״י הַשְּׁוָה לְשִׂנְאָתָם שֶׁל שִׁנְאָתוֹ
הַמִּצְרִים – אוֹתָה שִׁנְאָה ״אַרְסִית״
הַמִּצְרִים – אוֹתָה שִׁנְאָה ״אַרְסִית״
הַמִּצְרִים לְעַנּוֹת אֶת בנ״י רְבּוּי שְׁנִים
הַמִּצְרִים לְעַנּוֹת אֶת בנ״י רְבּוּי שְׁנִים
בְּחָזְקָה כ״כ, וְעַל בֵּן נִגְזַר עַל כּוּלָם
(וּבְּכַלְלָם עַל הַ״יִרִא״) הָעֹנֶשׁ ״הְרוֹג״
– ״לֹא נִשְׁאַר בַּהֶם עַד אָחַד״.

THE ULTIMATE HATRED

Now we can also understand the emphasis placed on the words, "**Based on this**⁴²...{even} the best of the Egyptians — {you must} kill" — for prior to the punishment {meted out} at the Splitting of the Sea, we had no clear indication that even "those who feared the word of Hashem" felt such hatred and were filled with such wickedness toward the Jewish people that as punishment, they equally deserved the punishment of being killed along with the other Egyptians.

The fact that "those who feared" were not distinguished from the other Egyptians throughout the other plagues (except pestilence and hail) does not prove that they were identical to the other Egyptians in their degree of hatred for, and wickedness toward, the Jewish people. Since the other plagues did not bear the greatest punishment — **death** — the Egyptians did not need to be as wicked {as the others to deserve those plagues}. Such punishments can be deserved because of lesser degrees of hatred and wickedness, which even "those who feared the word of Hashem" possessed. Therefore, even they deserved to be punished by those plagues.

Even though the Plague of the Firstborn bore the punishment of death ("kill"), Rashi explained **previously**, "Why were the sons of the female servants killed? Because they too would enslave the Jewish people and rejoice in their misfortune."⁴³ That is, even this punishment involving death, while not imposed on an

י. וּבָזֶה תִּתְבָּאֵר גַּם הַהַּדְגָּשָׁה ״מִכְּאן
כּוּ׳ כָּשֵׁר שֶׁבֵּמִּצְרִים הַרוֹג״ – כֵּיוָן
שֻׁעֵד עֹנֶשׁ קרי״ס עֲדֵין אֵין הוֹכָחָה
בְּרוּרָה שֶׁגַּם אָצֶל ״הַיָּרֵא אֶת דְּבַר ה׳״
הְיְתָה הַשִּׂנְאָה וְהָרִשְׁעוּת כְּלַפֵּי בנ״י
בַּמִּדָּה גְּדוֹלֶה כָּל כָּךְ עַד שֻׁיִּתְחַיֵּב עַל
כָּךְ בַּל הַמִּצְרִים
בְּשָׁנָשׁ ״הְרוֹג״ עִם כָּל הַמִּצְרִים

מְזָה שֶׁבְּשָׁאַר הַמַּכּוֹת (חוּץ מְדֶּבֶר וּבַרַד) לא מַצִינוּ שֶהַ״יֵרָא״ נִשְׁתַּנַּה מִשָּׁאַר הַמִּצְרִים, עַדַיִן אֵין רְאַיַ׳ שֵׁלֹא נִבְדַל מֵהֶם בִּמְדַת הַשָּׁנָאֲה וְהַרְשָׁעוּת לבנ"י, כי מאחר שמכות אלו לא כללו ענש מיתה, שהוא הענש השלם וָהַגַּדוֹל בִּיוֹתֶר, קַבַּלַתַן לֹא דַּרְשַׁה אָת הַמְּרֵה הַמְּלֵאַה וְהַגְּרוֹלַה בִּיוֹתֵר שֵׁל רְשָׁעוּת הַמָּצְרִים, אֻלַּא הָן הַיוּ רְאוּיוֹת לַבוֹא כִּעֹנֵשׁ אַף עַל מִדַּה קְטַנַּה יוֹתֵר שׁל שִּׁנְאָה וְרְשִׁעוֹת, שֵׁהַיִּתָה גַּם אֵצֵל ״הַיַּרָא אָת דְּבַר ה״, וְלַכֵן נִתְחַיֵּב אַף הוא בעונשן של מכות אלו. וַאַפָּלוּ בִּנוֹגֵעַ לְמַכַּת בִּכוֹרוֹת, שֶׁאַמְנַם הַיָתָה עֹנֵשׁ מִיתָה (״הַרוֹג״), הַרִי כְּבַר פַרשׁ רַשִּׁ״י לְעֵיל ״לַמַּה לַקוּ בִּנִי השפחות שאף הם היו משעבדים בהם ושמחים בצרתם", כלומר שגם ענש מִיתָה זֵה, כֵּיוָן שֵׁלֹא בַּא עַל

 $^{^{42}\{\}mbox{This resolves the question from sec. 7,}$ subsection d.}

⁴³ Rashi on Shemos 5:11.

entire family, but only on a small portion of a family—the firstborn—was not necessarily justified only in response to the full measure of Egyptian wickedness. Thus, the "sons of the female servants" were also stricken by this plague.

It it specifically, "based on this" — based on the decimation of the Egyptians (at the Splitting of the Sea) whereby "not even one of them remained," that we have proof that even "those who feared the word of Hashem" ("the best of the Egyptians") of that generation were completely identical to the other Egyptians in their intense degree of hatred and wickedness toward the Jewish people. Thus, they also deserved the punishment

הַמִּשְׁפָּחָה כּוּלָּהּ, כִּי אָם עַל חֵלֶק קָטָן מִמֶּנָה – עַל הַבְּכוֹרוֹת, אֵינוֹ דַּוְקָא עַל הַמִּדָּה הַמְּלֵאָה שֶׁל רִשְׁעוּת הַמִּצְרִים, וְלָכֵן גַּם ״בְּנֵי הַשְּׁפָחוֹת״ נִכְלְלוּ בְּמַכָּה זוֹ.

דַּוְקָא ״מִכָּאן״ – מִן הַנֵּס (דקרי״ס) שֶׁבּוֹ כִּלְיוֹן הַמִּצְרִים הָי׳ בְּאֹפֶן שֶׁ״לֹא נִשְׁאַר בָּהֶם עַד אֶחָד״ – יֵשׁ רְאָיָ׳ שֶׁגַּם ״הַיָּרֵא אֶת דְּבַר ה׳״ (״כְּשֵׁר שֶׁבַּמִּצְרִים״) מִן הַדּוֹר הַהוּא, הָי׳ בְּשָׁוֶה מַמָּשׁ לְכָל שְׁאָר הַמִּצְרִים בְּגֹדֶל שִׂנְאָתוֹ וְרִשְׁעוּתוֹ כְּלַפֵּי בנ״י, וְלָכֵן הִשְׁתַּוָּה לָהֶם גַּם בְּעֹנֶשׁ ״הֲרוֹג״.

11.

WHY KILL "THE BEST?"

of "kill."

Now we can also understand⁴⁴ why, "{even} the best of the Egyptians — {you must} kill": Since Rashi quotes this teaching in order to resolve a difficulty in **this verse**, we understand that "{even} the best of the Egyptians..." refers to the Egyptians (of that generation) spoken about in this verse — **those** Egyptians (even "the best" of them) deserve to be 'killed' as punishment, for the reason mentioned above. Rashi's remarks do not apply at all to the Egyptians of other generations, whether decent or wicked.

However, the novice student may still ask: The wording, "based on this" {lit., 'from here'}, Rabbi Shimon would say..." implies that this is relevant in

יא. עפ״ז יוּבֵן גַּם טַעַם הַכְּלָל ״בָּשֵׁר שֶׁבֵּמִצְרִים הֲרוֹג״: כֵּיוָן שֶׁרַשִּ״י הֵבִיא זֹאת בְּפֵרוּשׁוֹ עַל מְנָת לְתָרִץ קוּשְׁיָא הַמִּתְעוֹנֶרֶת בְּפָסוּק זֶה, הֲרֵי מוּבָן בְּפַשְׁטוּת שֶׁ״בָּשֵׁר שֶׁבַּמִּצְרִים כּוּ״״ קַאֵי עַל הַמִּצְרִים (מֵהַדּוֹר הַהוּא) שֶׁצְלִיהֶם מְדוּבָּר בַּפָּסוּק – שֶׁאוֹתֶם מִצְרִים (אֲפָלוּ הַכְּשֵׁר שֶׁבָּהֶם) רְאוּיִים לְעֹנֶשׁ ״הְרוֹג״ – וּמִטַּעַם הַנַּ״ל. וְאָלוּ לַמִּצְרִים מִדּוֹרוֹת אֲחֵרִים, בֵּין הַבְּשֵׁרִים וּבֵין הָרְשָׁעִים, לֹא הִתְרַחֵס רַשִּׁ״י בְּלָל.

אַף עַדין שוֹאֵל הַבֵּן חָמֵשׁ: מִן הַלְּשׁוֹן ״מִבָּאן הָי׳ ר״ש אוֹמֵר כוּ׳״ מַשְׁמָע שָׁעִנִין זֶה נוֹגֵעַ גַּם לְמָקוֹם אַחָר,

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^{44 {}This resolves the question in sec. 2.}

another context, for later generations. What difference does it make to later generations that "{even} the best of the Egyptians (of **that** generation) — {you must} kill"?

To forestall this question, Rashi quotes Rabbi Shimon's subsequent remarks: "{Even} the best of the serpents — {you must} crush their brains." This emphasizes that the dictum, "{even} the best of **the Egyptians** — {you must} kill," *per se*, is not relevant for future generations, but it informs our future conduct regarding the dictum, "{even} the best of the serpents — {you must} crush their brains."

Moreover, this (the phrase, "on this basis") informs us that if an individual arises whose **evil** intent toward the Jewish people is such that we may {justifiably} refer to him as a "serpent" — just as Shimshon was called a serpent in the **positive sense**⁴⁵ — then the rule, "{even} the best of the serpents…" would apply.

It's noteworthy that in the days of Rashi and his disciples, there were many who behaved as "serpents" toward the Jewish people — as we can see from the elegies composed by Rashi and his disciples.

12.

THE APPROACH TO HATE

With this in mind, we can also understand⁴⁶ the novelty of the teaching, "{even} the best of the serpents — {you must} crush their brains" (even the Torah says explicitly, "he will pound your head"): The verse, "he will

לַדּוֹרוֹת שֶׁלְאַחַר מִכֵּן – וּלְמַאי נָפְּקָא מִנָּה לְדוֹרוֹת אֲחֵרִים זֶה שֶׁ״כָּשֵׁר שֶׁבַּמִּצְרִים (בַּדּוֹר הַהוּא) הַרוֹג״?

ְּוְלָכֵן הֵבִיא רַשִּ״י אֶת הֶמְשֵׁךְ מַאֲמָר ר״ש ״טוֹב שֶׁבַּנְּחָשִׁים רְצֹץ אֶת מוחו״, שֶׁבְּזֶה מַדְגִּישׁ, שהנפק״מ לְדוֹרוֹת אֵינָהּ עִנְיָן ״כָּשֵׁר שֶׁבַּמִּצְרִים הַרוֹג״ גּוּפָא, אֶלָא עַד כַּמָּה מְלַמְדֵנוּ עִנְיַן זֶה בְּנוֹגעַ לִכְלַל ״טוֹב שֶׁבַּנְּחָשִׁים רִצֹץ אָת מוֹחוֹ״.

ְּעוֹד לְהוֹסִיף: מֵעְנְיָן זֶה (״מִכָּאן״)
יוֹדְעִים אָנוּ גַּם, שֶׁאָם יָקוּם בַּעֲתִיד מִי
שיהי׳ מוּחְזָק בְּיַחֲסוֹ לְרָעָה אֶל בנ״י
עַד שֶׁנְּתַּן יהי׳ לִקְרוֹתוֹ ״נָחָשׁ״ – ע״ד
שֶׁמָצִינוּ לִמְעַלְיוּתָא שֵׁשִׁמְשׁוֹן נִקְרָא
נָחָשׁ – יָחוּל עָלָיו הַכְּלָל: טוֹב
שֶׁבַּנְחָשִׁים כּוּ׳.

וּלְהָעִיר, שֶׁבִּימֵי רַשִּ״י (וְתַלְמִידָיו) הָיוּ רַבִּים שֶׁיַּחֲסָם לבנ״י הָי׳ בְּדוּגְמֵת ״נָחָשׁ״ – כַּנִּרְאֶה גַּם בַּקִינוֹת שֶׁנִּכְתְּבוּ ע״י רַשִּ״י וְתַלְמִידֵיו.

יב. וּבָזֶה יוּבַן גַּם הַחָדּוּשׁ שֶׁבְּמַאֲמָר ״טוֹב שֶׁבַּנְּחָשִׁים רְצֹץ אֶת מוֹחוֹ״ (אע״פּ שֶׁמִּקְרָא מְפֹּרָשׁ הוּא ״הוּא יִשׁוּפָדָּ רֹאשׁ״): מָן הַכַּתוּב ״הוּא

⁴⁵ **Rashi's commentary** on *Bereishis* 49:11. {Rashi mentions the story of the conclusion of Shimshon's life; see *Shoftim*, ch. 16.}

⁴⁶ {Resolving the question in sec. 6, subsection

d.}

pound your head, and you will bite his heel" teaches us only of the correspondence between, "he will pound your head" and "you will bite his heel" (as a warning) — you should *smash a serpent's "head"* **precisely** when it is about to *bite your heel*.

The novelty of Rabbi Shimon's teaching: Just as we find that the best of the Egyptians deserved to be killed on account of their "venomous" hatred of the Jewish people [and not because they waged war against the Jewish people, as explained above], the same applies to a serpent — since Hashem **decreed** that, "I will plant enmity between you and {the woman}...,"⁴⁷ a person need not wait for a serpent to attack (and only then *pound its head*). Rather, as soon as he sees a serpent, he should "crush its brain." Even the "**best** of the serpents" is similar to the best of the Egyptians described in our *parshah* (i.e., Egyptians of that generation) — he is your dangerous enemy (for "I will **plant enmity...**").

{The maxim} "a rule that clarifies {another topic} is also itself clarified" {can be applied to our discussion here}: Rabbi Shimon's concluding teaching, "{even} the best of the serpents — crush their brains," quoted by Rashi, clarifies that Rabbi Shimon's initial teaching: "{Even} the best of the Egyptians — {you must} kill" refers only to that generation of Egyptians whose hatred of the Jewish people was comparable to the enmity of serpents for humans ("I will plant enmity...").

ישופָר ראש וְאַתַּה תִשׁוּפָנוּ עַקָב״ לַמַדָנוּ רַק שֵ״הוּא יִשׁוּפָּדְּ רֹאשׁ״ אֲמוּר בְּקַשֵּׁר אֵל (וְכַאַזָהַרָה שָׁמַא) ״אַתַּה תִשוּפֵנוּ עֵקַב״ – הַיִנוּ שֵׁיֵשׁ לְרוֹצֵץ אָת – ״ראש״ הַנַּחַשׁ בָּאוֹתַהּ עֵת, כָּשָׁהוּא בִּמַצַב שֵׁל ״וְאַתָּה תִשׁוּפֵנוּ עָקֵב״. וע"ז מָחָדָשׁ ר"ש: כְּשֵׁם שֵׁמַצִינוּ שַאַפָּלוּ כָשַׁרִים שַבַּמִּצְרִים ״הַרוֹג״ מצד שנאתם ה"ארסית" כּלפּי בנ"י [וָלֹא מָצֵּד תִּקִיפַתַם וּמִלְחַמִתַּם בבנ״י] בָן הוּא גַּם לְעִנִין הַנַּחֵשׁ, שֶׁעַלִיו גַּזַר – כֵּן הוּא גַּם לְעִנִין הַנַּחַשׁ הקב״ה ״וָאֵיבָה אֲשִׁית בֵּינְדְּ וּבֵין גּוֹ״, שָׁאָין לְחַכּוֹת עַד שֶׁהַנַּחַשׁ יִתְּקֹף אָת הַאַדַם (וַאַזַי "יִשׁוּפִדְּ רֹאשׁ"), אֻלַּא מַיַּד בְּעָת רָאִיַת הַנַּחַשׁ – ״רָצֹץ אָת מוחו״ – כֵּיוַן שֶׁגַם ״טוֹב שֶׁבַּנְחַשִׁים״ הוא, בִּדוֹמֵה לְכַשֵׁר שַׁבַּמְצְרִים מְפַּרַשַׁתֵנוּ (מֵאוֹתוֹ הַדּוֹר) – שוֹנֵא מָסוּכַּן (״וְאֵיבָה אָשִׁית גֵּו״)

וּכָא לְלַמֵּד וְנִמְצָא לָמֵד: עי״ז שֶׁרַשִּ״י מֵבִיא גַּם אֶת סִיּוּם דְּבְרֵי ר״ש ״טוֹב שֶׁבַּנְּחָשִׁים רְצֹץ אֶת מוֹחוֹ״ מִתְבָּרֶנֶת הַכּּנְנָה גַּם בִּתְחִלַּת הַמַּאֲמָר ״כָּשֵׁר שֶׁבַּמִּצְרִים הֲרוֹג״ – דְּקָאֵי רַק עַל אוֹתוֹ הַדּוֹר שֶׁל הַמִּצְרִים, שֶׁבְּשִׂנְאָתָם לבנ״י הָיוּ בְּדוּגְמַת שִׂנְאַת נָחָשׁ לְאָדָם (״וְאֵיבָה אָשִׁית וְגוֹ״).

^{47 {}Bereishis 3:15.}

THE APPROACH TO HATE

What, truly, is the reason that such an exceptionally hateful generation thrived precisely at that time? To address this, Rashi quotes the exact wording (of the *Mechilta*), "{even} the best of the serpents — {you must} crush their **brains**" (which accords with the abovementioned maxim, *the rule that instructs is also instructed*):

Just as in the case of the serpent, in which the decree "and I will plant enmity..." was an outcome of the fact that "the serpent was **cunning**..." — {a function of} his brain — which resulted in the sin of the Tree of Knowledge, etc. — the Egyptians' hatred was also predicated on a particular cause (which fueled their hatred). The cause of their hatred was Pharaoh's directive, "Let us deal **wisely** with them..." ⁴⁸ — i.e., all Egyptians should act wisely — with "cunning." This "cunning" led to the harsh subjugation and oppression of the Jewish people.

Rashi alludes to this with his nuanced wording, "their brains" (and not "their heads"):⁴⁹ The serpent must be killed because of its "brain" ("the serpent was **cunning**"), which led to Hashem saying, "I will plant enmity...." Similarly, the maxim "{even} the best of the Egyptians — {you must} kill," is based on the Egyptians' cunning, which was predicated on Pharaohs plan, "Let us

יג. וּמַהִּי אָכֵן הַסִּבָּה לְכָךְ שֻׁדַּוְקָא הַדּוֹר הַהוּא שֶׁל הַמִּצְרִים הָי׳ יוֹצֵא מִן הַכְּלָל בְּשִׂנְאָתוֹ? – הַנָּה ע״ז דִּיֵּק רַשִׁ״י לְהָבִיא אֶת הַלְשׁוֹן (מֵהַמְּכִילְתָּא) ״טוֹב שֶׁבַּנְּחָשִׁים רְצֹץ אֶת מוֹחוֹ״ (ע״ד הָאָמוּר לְעֵיל, בָּא לְלַמֵּד וְנִמְצָא לָמֵד):

כְּשֵׁם שֶׁאֵצֶל הַנְּחָשׁ הַסִּבָּה לֹגְזֵרַת
״וְאֵיבָה אָשִׁית גוֹ׳״ הָיְתָה ״וְהַנָּחָשׁ
הָי׳ עָרוּם גוֹ׳״ – ״מוֹחוֹ״ –
שֶׁכַּתּוֹצָאָה מִזֶּה אֵרַע חֵטְא עה״ד וְכוּ׳
בָּךְ גַם לְשִׂנְאַת הַמִּצְרִים הָיְתָה סִבָּה מִיּיּחָדֶת (וְלָכֵן הָיְתָה זוֹ שִׂנְאָה שֶׁלֹא בְּהַשְׁוָאָה לְדוֹרוֹת אֲחֵרִים) מִצֵּד
בְּהַשְׁוָאָה לְדוֹרוֹת אֲחֵרִים) מִצֵּד
בְּהַלְּמִה ״הָבָה נִתְחַכְּמָה לוֹ גוֹ׳״
הַמְצְרִים – ״עָרוּם״, וְזֶה הֵבִיא לְלְשִׁי
הַשִּׁעְבּוּד וְעָנוּי בנ״י.

וְלָזֶה רָמֵז רַשִּ״י בְּדִיּוּק הַלְּשוֹן
״מוֹחוֹ״ (וְלֹא ״רֹאשׁוֹ״): הַטַּעַם שֶׁיֵשׁ
לַהֲרֹג אֶת הַנְּחָשׁ הוּא בִּגְלַל ״מוֹחוֹ״
(״וְהַנְּחָשׁ הִי׳ עָרוּם״) אֲשֶׁר גָּרַם
לְ״וְאֵיבָה אָשִׁית גּוֹ׳״; וְכָךְ גַּם הַכְּלָל
״כְּשֵׁר שֶׁבַּמִּצְרִים הֲרוֹג״ בָּא כַּתּוֹצָאָה
מֵהְתַחַכָּמוּתַם, מֵאֲמִירַת ״הַבַּה

⁴⁸ Shemos 1:10.

 $^{^{\}rm 49}$ {This resolves the question raised in sec. 7, subsection c.}

deal **wisely** with them." This culminated in the harsh subjugation and oppression in Egypt.

נְתְחַכְּמָה לוֹ״ שֶׁהֵבִיאָה לְּלְשִׁי הַשִּׁעָבּוּד וְעָנּוּי מָצְרַיִם.

14.

RABBI SHIMON!

A general question could be posed regarding this solution: How do we know that the best of the Egyptians" were killed as a result of **their** hatred and wickedness? Perhaps they were killed because of a Heavenly **decree**, and not because a known reason?

To forestall this question,⁵⁰ Rashi cites the author of the teaching by name — Rabbi Shimon — for Rabbi Shimon is known as the one who "expounds reasons behind Scriptural verses {and narratives}." Here too, he follows his own approach.

יד. אֶלָּא שֶׁכָּאן עוֹלָה שְׁאֵלָה עַל
כְּלֵלוּת הַבֵּאוּר: מִנַּיִן הָרְאָיָ׳ שֶׁהַרִיגַּת
גַּם ״כְּשֵׁר שֻׁבַּמִּצְרִים״ הְיְתָה בִּגְלַל
הַשִּׂנְאָה וְהָרִשְׁעוּת שֻׁלְּהֶם – וַהְבִי
אֶפְשָׁר שֶׁהָיְתָה זוֹ גְּזֵרָה מֵאֵת ה׳ לְלֹא
טַצַם גָּלוּי?
וְלָכֵן הַבִיא רַשִׁ״י אֶת שֵׁם בַּעַל
הַמֵּימְרָא – ר׳ שִׁמְעוֹן – כֵּיוָן שַׂר׳
שִׁמְעוֹן ״דָּרִישׁ טַעְמָא דִּקְרָא״ וְאָזִיל
גם כִּאן לשיטתי׳.

15.

INADMISSIBLE IN DEBATES

In light of this, it is clear why, in the various debates (mentioned earlier) regarding Rabbi Shimon's teaching, our Sages were unable to avail themselves of this explanation:⁵¹

Although this explanation is extremely **simple**, it **only** pertains to Rashi's commentary, because:

a. Rashi **only** explains the plain meaning of the verse, i.e., he limits the scope of his commentary to the

טו. וּלְפִּי זֶה מוּבָן הַטַּעַם שֶׁבְּכֶל הַוִּכּוּחִים אוֹדוֹת מַאֲמֶר ר״ש (כַּנַּ״ל) לֹא הָי׳ נִתַּן לְיַשְׁבוֹ ע״י הַסְבָּרָה זוֹ:

הַבּאוּר הָאָמוּר הוּא אָמְנָם פְּשׁוּט בְּהָחְלֵט, אַך הוּא מַתְאִים רַק בְּפֵרוּשׁ רַשִּׁ״י, וּמִשְׁנֵי טְעָמִים: א) רַשִׁ״י בָּא לְפָרִשׁ רַק ״פְּשׁוּטוֹ שֶׁל מִקָרַא״, הַיָנוּ, רַק אֵת הַפַּסוּק שֲׁבּוֹ

 $^{^{50}}$ {This resolves the question raised in sec. 7, subsection a.}

 $^{^{51}}$ {This resolves the question raised in sec. 5.}

verse that is the subject of his remarks. Therefore, "the best of the **Egyptians**" (in **Rashi's commentary**) refers to the Egyptians mentioned in **this verse**.

קָאֵי, וְלָכֵן (בְּפֵרוּשׁ רַשִּׁ״י) ״בְּשֵׁר שָׁבַּמִּצְרִים״ פֵּרוּשׁוֹ – הַמִּצְרִים הַנִּזְכָּרִים בַּפָּסוּק זֶה.

b. In Rashi's commentary, "{Even} the best of the serpents — {you must} crush their brains" follows after the statement that "{even} the best of the Egyptians, {you must} kill." (Thus, the dictum "{even} the best of the serpents..." is also learned "**from here**" {i.e., from the previous statement}). Accordingly, this proves and validates the conclusion that "{even} the best of the Egyptians — {you must} kill" refers only to the Egyptians of that generation, as explained above.⁵²

ב) בְּפֵרוּשׁ רַשִּׁ״י מוּבָא ״טוֹב שָׁבַּנְּחָשִׁים רְצֹץ אֶת מוֹחוֹ״ כְּהָמְשֵׁךְּ לְ״כְּשֵׁר שֶׁבַּמִּצְרִים הֲרוֹג״ (שֶׁלָכֵן גַּם ״טוֹב שֶׁבַּנְחָשִׁים כּוּ״״ נִלְמֵד ״מִכָּאן״), וּמִמֵּילָא הֲרֵי זוֹ גַּם הוֹכָחָה וְגִלוּי דַּעַת שַׁ״כָּשֵׁר שֶׁבַּמִּצְרִים הֲרוֹג״ קָאֵי רַק עַל הַמִּצְרִים שֵׁבָּאוֹתוֹ הַדּוֹר, כַּנַ״ל.

In contrast, in tractate *Sofrim* and similar texts,⁵³ Rabbi Shimon's dictum is quoted not in a specific context: "Rabbi Shimon taught: "{Even} the best of the pagan nations... {you must} kill; {even} the best of the serpents — {you must} crush their brains; {even} the best of women practice witchcraft." This cannot be explained the same way {we explained similar remarks in Rashi's commentary}, since tractate *Sofrim* does not associate this dictum to a specific generation or particular "gentiles" (or to Egyptians).

משא״כ כְּשֶׁהַנִּדּוֹן הוּא מַאֲמָר ר׳ שִׁמְעוֹן כְּפִי שֶׁהוּבָא בְּמַפֶּכֶת סוֹפְרִים וכיו״ב, שֶׁהַנּוּפָח בּוֹ הוּא בְּסִגְנוֹן סְתָמִי: ״תָּנִי רַשְׁבִּ״י הַטוֹב שֶׁבָּעַכּוּ״ם כּוּ׳ הַרוֹג הַטוֹב שֶׁבַּנְחָשִׁים רְצֹץ אֶת מוֹחוֹ הַכְּשֵׁרָה שֶׁבְּנְשִׁים בַּעֲלַת כְּשָׁפִים״ – אִי אֶפְשָׁר לְבָאֵר כֵּן, כֵּיוָן שֶׁאֵין מְדוּבָּר כָּאן בְּדוֹר מְסוּיָם אוֹ בְּסוּג מִפּוּיָם שֵׁל ״גּוֹיִם״ (אוֹ מִצְרִים);

Additionally, since a third clause, "{even} the best of women practice witchcraft" is added (in tractate *Sofrim*, etc.) which is completely unrelated to, "{even} the best of the pagan nations...," we are compelled to see each of the three clauses as **independent** statements: "{Even} the best of women..." teaches us about the nature of women; and, "{even} the best of the serpents..." teaches us about the nature of serpents.

ְעוֹד – פֵּיוָן שֶׁכָּאן (בְּמַפֶּכֶת סוֹפְרִים וֹכִיו״ב) נוֹסַף בְּמַאֲמָר זֶה בְּבָא ג׳ ״הַכְּשֵׁרָה שֶׁבְּעַלֵּת כְּשָׁפִים״, ״הַכְּשֵׁרָה שֶׁבְּעַכּוּ״, שָׁאֵינוֹ שַׁיָּךְ כְּלֶל לַ״הַטוֹב שֶׁבְּעַכּוּ״ם שִּׁיִרְ בְּלָל לַ״הַטוֹב שֶׁבְּעַכּוּ״ם כּוּ״״ – צָרִידְ לוֹמַר, שֶׁכָּל א׳ מג׳ הַבָּבוֹת הוּא עִנִין נִפְרָד בִּפְנֵי עַצְמוֹ: הַבְּבוֹת הוּא עִנִין נִפְרָד בִּפְנֵי עַצְמוֹ: ״הַכְּשִׁרָה שֶׁבְּנָשִׁים כוּ״״ – הוֹרָאָה הַשַּׁיֶכֶת לְטֶבַע הַנְשִׁים; ״הַטוֹב

^{52 {}Sec. 12.}

⁵³ Similarly, the *Jerusalem Talmud*, "Kiddushin," ch. 4, par. 11.

Neither of these statements were said in reference to a particular generation.

So too regarding, "{even} the best of the pagan nations..." — this teaches us (for all times) about the **nature** of gentiles.

שֶׁבַּנְּחָשִׁים כּוּ״ – בְּנוֹגֵעַ לְטָבַע הַנְּחָשִׁים, – וּשְׁתֵּיהָן – אֵינָן אֲמוּרוֹת דַּוְקָא בְּדוֹר מְסוּיָם – וְכָךְ גַּם ״הַטוֹב שֶׁבָּעַכּוּ״ם כּוּ״״ הוּא הוֹרָאָה (לְכָל הַזְּמַנִּים) אוֹדוֹת טֶבַע

16.

EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTION

As mentioned several times, we can often apply Rashi's Torah commentary to *halachic* issues:

Rabbi Eliezer taught in tractate *Sanhedrin*⁵⁴ regarding "a wolf... and a serpent," ⁵⁵ that "whoever kills them proactively, merits {the performance of a *mitzvah*}"; {convening} a court of 23 judges is not necessary (in line with the opinion of the *Tanna Kamma*). ⁵⁶ Rabbi Yochanan and Reish Lakish debate this point: ⁵⁷ Reish Lakish maintains that this applies only when the serpent had killed a person previously — making the serpent liable to be killed. Only then do we deem a court case unnecessary (unlike in the case of an ox {that killed a person}). However, if the serpent had not killed a person previously, we may not kill the serpent. Conversely, Rabbi Yochanan maintains that Rabbi Eliezer's teaching applies, "even if it had not killed a person" — "whoever kills them first merits {the

טז. כָּבַר נִתְבַּאֵר כַּמַה פִּעַמִים, שַּמְפֵּרוּשׁ רַשִּ״י עַל הַתּוֹרָה יֵשׁ לִלְמֹד בכו״כ מְקוֹמוֹת גַם עִנְיַנִים הַנּוֹגְעִים לחלק ההלכה שבתורה – ובעניננו: דעת ר׳ אליעזר בּמס׳ סנהדרין היא ש״זאב וכוּ׳ והנחש.. כל הקודם לָהוֹרְגַן זַכַה״, וְאָין צַרִיךְ בּ״ד שֵׁל כ״ג (כּדעת ת״ק). ונחלקוּ בּזה ר׳ יוֹחנן וָרִישׁ לַקִּישׁ: ר״ל ס״ל שֶׁהַדְּבַרִים עמוּרִים רַק כְּשֶׁהַנַּחַשׁ הָמִית אַדַם – שַאַז מִתְחַיֵּב מִיתַה – וְעַל זָה אֵין צָרִיךְ ב״ד (כְּמוֹ שֵׁצַּרִיךְ בִּשׁוֹר וְכוּ׳); אַבַל אָם הַנַּחַשׁ לֹא הָמִית אַדַם, אַסוּר לְהַרְגוֹ; וְאָלוּ ר׳ יוֹחַנַן אוֹמֵר שַׁדְּבָרֵי ר"א "כל הקודם להורגן זכה" הם ״אע״פ שׁלֹא הָמִיתוּ״, לְפִי שֵׁ״אֵין לַהֶם תַּרְבּוּת״.

⁵⁴ Sanhedrin 2a, in the Mishnah.

⁵⁵ {This *Mishnah* describes the judicial procedures for animals that caused a person's death. Rabbi Eliezer maintains that for these wild animals, no

judicial procedure is necessary; they may be killed on sight.}

⁵⁶ {The *Tanna Kamma* is the first authority listed in a *Mishnah*.}

⁵⁷ Sanhedrin 15b.

performance of a *mitzvah*}," since "these species can never be domesticated."58

According to Rashi's explanation (based on *pshat*), the dictum that "{even} the best of serpents..." is learned from, "{even} the best of Egyptians, {you must} kill." (Bearing in mind that Rashi's explanations of the Torah must be interpreted, first and foremost, according to **their plain meaning**,) we can draw the following conclusions:

ְרָהְנֵה לְפִי פֵּרוּשׁ רַשִּׁ״י (בפשש״מ) שָׁדִּין ״טוֹב שֶׁבַּנְּחָשִׁים כּוּ״ נִלְמַד מִן הַפְּלָל ״כָּשֵׁר שֶׁבַּמְצְרִים הֲרוֹג״ (וְהֲרֵי דְּבְרֵי רַשִּׁ״י עַל הַתּוֹרָה צְרִיכִים לְהִתְפָּרִשׁ לְכֹל לְרֹאשׁ – כִּפְשׁוּטָם), נִמְצָא לְעִנְיָנֵנוּ:

a. A court hearing is not required to justify killing a serpent, in the same way that each Egyptian was not tried individually. [If they would have been tried individually, the rule that, "the court shall judge... and the court **shall protect**" would have had to have been applied. Meaning, the judges would have had to look for the merits of the Egyptians {and take them into consideration}. But in this case, even "those who feared the word of Hashem" were killed, "not one {of them remained}."⁵⁹] Rather, this {divine death} decree applied to **all** the Egyptians, all together (categorically).

א) אֵין צָרִיךְ מִשְׁפָּט בְּבֵית דִּין ע״מ לַהֲרֹג אֶת הַנָּחָשׁ, כְּשֵׁם שֶׁלֹא נִדּוֹן כָּל מִצְרִי לְחוּד [שא״כ הָי׳ צָרִיךְ לְנְהֹג בּוֹ ע״פ הַכְּלָל ״וְשָׁפְטוּ הָעֵדָה גּוֹ׳ וְהִצִּילוּ הָעֵדָה״ וּלְהַפֵּךְ בִּוְכוּתוֹ, וְאִלוּ כָּאן הוֹמַת גַּם ״הַיָּרִא אֶת דְּבֵר ה׳״ – ״עַד אֶחָד״], אֶלָּא גְּזֵרַת הַכְּלָיָ״ חַלָּה עַל כָּל הַמָּצִרִים, וּבְבַת (וּבְגַדֵר וּבְמַדֵּה) אֲחַת.

b. Even a serpent that "had **not** killed a person" must be killed — for even "the **best** of serpents ...crush their brains" [similar to the rule that "{even} the **best** of Egyptians ...kill" which was stated (**not** on account of their **war** against the Jewish people, but rather) on account of their deep-seated hatred of the Jewish people].

ב) הֲרִיגַת הַנָּחָשׁ הִיא אֲפִי׳ ״כְּשֶׁלֹא הַמִּיתוּ״ – כֵּיוָן שֶׁאֲפִלּוּ ״טוֹב שֶׁבֵּנְחָשִׁים רְצֹץ אֶת מוֹחוֹ״ [ע״ד ״כָּשֵׁר שֶׁבַּמִּצְרִים הֲרוֹג״, שֶׁהָי׳ (לֹא מִצֵּר מִלְחַמְתָּם עִם בנ״י, אֶלָּא) מִצֵּד עֵצֵם שָׂנָאַתַם לֹבנ״י].

c. This only applies to a serpent, regarding which Hashem decreed, "I will plant enmity between you

ג) כָּל זֶה הוּא רַק בְּנוֹגֵעַ לְנָחָשׁ, שָׁעַלִיו יֵשְׁנָה גְּזֵרָה ״וְאִיכָה אֲשִׁית

⁵⁸ {An animal that cannot ever be tamed must be ownerless; therefore, we can proceed with killing it extrajudicially.}

⁵⁹ For how could it be possible that if they **searched**, merits could not be found for at least one of them!?

and...." In contrast, we might be able to say that other animals "... may be domesticated."

בֵּינְךּ וּבֵין גּוֹ׳״, משא״כ בע״ח אֲחַרִים, אֶפְשָׁר לוֹמַר שָׁ״יֵשׁ לָהֶם תַּרְבּוּת״.

17.

THE PERSONAL LESSON

The lesson that every individual can apply in their divine service:

Our Sages teach that the serpent "represents the evil inclination." On occasion, the evil inclination appears to be "pious" — "**the best** of the serpents." The Evil Inclination maintains that it wishes to make peace with the Good Inclination predicated on a compromise: It will allow the Jew to study Torah, etc., during the time for Torah study, provided that the Good Inclination allows the person to indulge his desires "a bit" during the time for eating, etc.

In response, Rabbi Shimon teaches, "{Even} the best of serpents — {you must} crush their brains:" We may never make peace with the Evil Inclination, for it is a "serpent." No matter its disguise, it hates you with unimaginable hatred.⁶¹ Its willingness to make concessions is one of the Evil Inclination's schemes: "Today he tells you to do this; tomorrow he tells you do that... {until finally he tells you to} worship idols...." Therefore, the Torah's recommended course of action is to "crush its **brains**"; we must obliterate its "**brain**," the cunning and schemes of the Evil Inclination.

יז. הַהוֹרָאָה מִזֶּה לְכָל אֶחָד בַּעֲבוֹדָתוֹ הַפְּרָטִית:

בְּדְבְרֵי חֲזַ״ל מְבֹאָר שֶׁהַנְּחָשׁ ״דָּא יצה״ר״. וְהָנָּה לְעִתִּים יֶשְׁנוֹ יצה״ר הַמִּתְלַבֵּשׁ בָּאִצְטְלָא שֶׁל יר״ש – ״טוֹב שֶׁבַּנְּחָשִׁים״: הוּא טוֹצֵן, שֶׁבִּרְצוֹנוֹ לַצְשׁוֹת ״שֶׁלוֹם״ עִם הַיֵּצֶר טוֹב, אֶלָּא שָׁיֵשׁ לַעֲשׁוֹת פְּשָׁרָה – הוּא יַנִּיחַ לַיְהוּדִי לִלְמֹד תּוֹרָה וְכוּ׳ בִּזְמֵן תּוֹרָה וְכוּ׳, והיצ״ט יַנִּיחַ לוֹ לְהִגְּרֵר ״מְצַט״ אַחַר תַּאֲווֹתִיו וְכוּ׳ בִּזְמֵן הָאֲכִילָה וְכוּ׳.

וע״ז אוֹמֵר ר״ש ״טוֹב שֶׁבַּנְּחָשִׁים רְצֹץ אֶת מוֹחוֹ״: אָסוּר לַעֲשׂוֹת שׁוּם
״שָׁלוֹם״ עִם היצה״ר, לִהְיוֹתוֹ
״נָחָשׁ״, אֲשֶׁר, יהי׳ אֲשֶׁר יהי׳ הַלְּבוּשׁ
שִׁיּתְכַּפֶּה בּוֹ, לְעוֹלָם שִׂנְאָתוֹ בְּתוֹקְפָה.
וְנָה שֶׁהוּא מִתְרַצֶּה לְוַתֵּר עַל דְּבָרִים
אֲחָדִים, הֲרֵי זָה מִתַּחְבּוּלוֹת הַיֵּצֶר,
שִׁ״הַיּוֹם אוֹמֵר לוֹ עֲשֵׂה כָּן וּלְמָחָר
אוֹמֵר לוֹ כּוּ׳ עֲבֹד ע״ז כּוּ׳״ – וְלָכֵן
הָצֵצָה עַל זָה הִיא: ״רְצֹץ אֶת מוֹחוֹ״
הָצֵרְ מֶּוֹ וְהַתִּחְבּוּלוֹת שֶׁל
הָעֲרְמוּמִיּת וְהַתַּחְבּוּלוֹת שֶׁל

⁶⁰ Zohar, vol. 1, p. 35b.

 $^{^{61}}$ See *Bereishis Rabbah*, beg. of ch. 54; *Midrash Tehillim* on psalm 34.

Another point: The idea behind nuanced wording in the verse, "when you eat from the toil of **your hands**"⁶² is well known — the toil of a Jew to earn a livelihood must only occupy "your hands," the faculty of action, while a person's head (the intelligence of the brain) must **always** be filled with Torah, etc.

This is the meaning of "crush its **brains**:" We must smash the **brain** of the Evil Inclination, so that a person's mind can be completely devoted to Torah and holiness.

By the Jewish people fulfilling the directive of our Sages that {even} "the best of serpents — crush their brains," throughout the period of exile, we will merit fulfillment of the promise that "even his enemies will make peace with him." As our Sages explain, "This {word, "enemies"} refers to "the serpent." Meaning, the serpent will also be transformed to the extent that "{it will} make **peace** with him."

-From talks delivered on Shabbos *parshas*Beshalach, Purim and Shabbos parshas Ki Sisa, 5729

(1969)

ְּעִלֹד עִנְיָן בָּזֶה: יָדוּעַ הַדִּיּוּק בְּמָה שָׁנָּאֶמֵר ״ִיִּגִיעַ כַּפֶּךְ כִּי תֹּאכֵל״ — שָׁיְגִיעַת הָאָדָם בְּעִסְקֵי הַפַּרְנָסָה צְרִיכָה לִהְיוֹת רַק בְּ״כַּפֶּּדְּ״, בְּכֹתַ הַמַּצְשֶׁה שֶׁלוֹ, אַדְ רֹאשׁוֹ (״רֹאשְׁדְ״ — הַשֵּׁכֶל שֶׁבַּמּוֹתַ) צָרִידְ תָּמִיד לִהְיוֹת מָלֵא בַּתּוֹרָה וְכוּ׳. מִלֵא בַּתּוֹרָה וְכוּ׳.

וְזֶהוּ ״רְצֹץ אֶת מוֹחוֹ״: יֵשׁ לְשַׁבֵּר אֶת מוֹחַ היצה״ר, כְּדֵי שֶׁהַמּוֹחַ יהי׳ מָסוּר וְנָתוּן לְגַמְרֵי לְתוֹרָה וְלִקְדוּשָׁה.

ועי״ז שבנ״י יְקַיְּמוּ אֶת הוֹרָאַת רז״ל ״טוֹב שֶׁבַּנְּחָשִׁים רְצֹץ אֶת מוֹחוֹ״ בִּזְמַן הַגָּלוּת, נְזְכָּה לְקִיּוּם הַיִּעוּד ״גַּם אוֹיְבָיו יַשְׁלִם אִתּוֹ״ וְכְבֵּאוּר חֲזַ״ל ״זָה הַנְּחָשׁ״ – שֶׁאַף מְצִיאוּת הַ״נְחָשׁ״ תִּתַהַפָּך, עַד אֲשֶׁר ״יַשָּׁלִים אָתּוֹ״.

⁶² Tehillim 128:2.

⁶³ Mishlei 16:7.

⁶⁴ Bereishis Rabbah 54:1. {I.e., the Evil Inclination.}

⁶⁵ See Yerushalmi, "Terumos," ch. 8, halacha 3; Bereishis Rabbah, ch. 54, par. 1.